

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 EB-07 OMB-01

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P 280535Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1154

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0049

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PP

SUBJECT: BOUGAINVILLE CONFLICT ERUPTS

1. BACKGROUND: IMMEDIATE TRIGGER LEADING TO RECENT WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION ON BOUGAINVILLE WAS ATTEMPT ON 20TH TO EVICT SECESSIONIST LEADERS FROM GPNG-OWNED HOUSING AND OFFICES. SERVICE OF SUMMONS ON DR. SAREI, HANNETT, ETC. WAS PART OF GPNG POLICY TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON SECESSIONIST LEADERS. SIMULTANEOUSLY SOMARE AGAIN CALLED FOR TALKS, WHICH WERE IMMEDIATELY REJECTED BY SECESSIONISTS AS BEING "UNDER BLACKMAIL CONDITIONS". SECESSIONISTS THREATENED COUNTER PRESSURE IN FORM OF WITHDRAWING ALL LAND AGREEMENTS WITH BOUGAINVILLE COPPER MINE AND GPNG. GPNG REINFORCED BOUGAINVILLE WITH ADDITIONAL POLICE ON WEEKEND OF JAN 24-25 JUST IN TIME FOR OUTBREAK ON THE 26TH.

2. ON 26TH SECESSIONIST LEADERS APPEARED IN COURT LOSING HOUSING EVICTION CASE. SAME DAY WITNESSED WIDESPREAD BURNING AND DESTRUCTION GPNG INSTALLATIONS AND AIRSTRIPS AT BUIN,  
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BOKA, AND BUKA AND CLOSURE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION

AT TOKOKINA, A MOVE WHICH EFFECTIVELY CUT TELECOMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE ISLAND AND THE MAINLAND. THE PRESS REPORTED UNCONFIRMED (AND UNTRUE) REPORTS OF A SECESSIONIST COLUMN HEADED FOR ARAWA AND KEITA, AND THE GPNG REINFORCED THE ISLAND AGAIN WITH ADDITIONAL RIOT SQUADS, BRINGING THE NUMBER UP TO FOUR, AND SENT A PNG DEFENSE FORCE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT TO REESTABLISH CONTACT. THE SAME MORNING 800 DEMONSTRATORS STRUCK AT BOKU AND DESTROYED THE SUB-PROVINCE HEADQUARTERS AND IT IS BELIEVED CAPTURED THE EXPATRIATE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE POST, HIS ASSISTANT AND FAMILY.

3. AFTER A DAY OF TURMOIL THE ISLAND WAS QUIET ON THE 27TH WITH TELECOMMUNICATIONS REESTABLISHED AND THE POLICE ORDERED TO RETAKE BUIN, HELD BY THE SECESSIONISTS, AND THEN BOKU. THIS MAY PROVE DIFFICULT AS ROADS ARE BLOCKED AND AIRSTRIPS OUT OF ORDER IN BOTH AREAS.

4. IN A LAST CHANCE APPEAL THE PRIME MINISTER CALLED UPON THE SECESSIONISTS TO RECONSIDER SITUATION IN A RADIO BROADCAST ON THE EVENING OF THE 27TH. HE ALSO TELEGRAPHED FR. JOHN MOMIS STATING HE WOULD SEND SIR MAORI KIKI TO NEGOTIATE AT A POINT OF THE SECESSIONISTS CHOOSING. SOMARE'S BROADCAST STATED "HARD LINE" ACTION WAS BEING WITHHELD ON HIS ORDERS BUT CONFRONTATION WAS INEVITABLE IF THERE WAS A FRESH OUTBREAK OF LAWLESSNESS. "I AM NOT THREATENING.....I AM STATING THE INEVITABLE". HE OBSERVED THAT "MANY IN THE NATIONAL GOVT NOW FAVOR OPEN CONFRONTATION AND SUPPRESSION."

5. FR. MOMIS IMMEDIATELY WENT ON THE AIR TO CAUTION BOUGAINVILLIANS NOT TO UPSET THE SITUATION, BUT INDICATED THAT THE SECESSIONISTS CANNOT HOLD DISCUSSIONS UNTIL SOMARE MEETS THEIR DEMANDS. THESE INCLUDE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ADDITIONAL POLICE ON BOUGAINVILLE, REVOCATION OF THE EVICTION ORDERS AGAINST SECESSIONISTS, PAYMENT OF AUS DOLLARS 2.7 IN ROYALTIES WHICH TERMINATED WHEN THE PROVINCIAL GOVT WAS SUSPENDED.

6. SOMARE HAS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE RESPONSE BUT HAS NOT CLOSED THE DOOR TO FUTURE NGOTIATIONS.

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UM AUSTRALIAN GOVT IMMEDIATELY ISSUED STATEMENT TO EFFECT AUSTRALIA WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY GROUP THAT ATTEMPTED TO UNDERMINE THE UNITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

8. COMMENT: SITUATION DEMONSTRATES SECESSIONISTS HAVE FIRM BACKING THROUGHOUT ISLAND. GPNG MUST FACE FACT THAT ISSUE WILL NOT EVAPORATE DESPITE PERIOD OF NEAR TRANQUILITY BETWEEN OUTBURSTS; AND THAT EACH ESCALATION INCREASES IN VIOLENCE.

MOMIS, HAS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN MAINTAINING PEACE WHEN HE DESIRES, BUT HAS CROSSED RUBICON IN INITIATING WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE ON 26TH.

9. GPNG STILL DIVIDED AS TO TACTICS, BUT POLICY OF IGNORING GROWING SECESSIONIST STRENGTH MUST SURELY NOW BE DISCREDITED.

10. COMPROMISE, WHILE POSSIBLE, WILL NOW APPEAR TO BE GOVT CAPITULATION MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR SOMARE TO RESTRAIN GPNG HAWKS.  
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